

News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending November 27, 2010

Aruba – Source: Dutch Officials 'Almost Certainly Know' Whether Jaw Bone Belongs to Natalee Holloway

The Dutch forensics team charged with examining a jaw bone that washed up on an Aruban beach has had Natalee Holloway's dental records in hand since Tuesday, more than enough time to make a comparison, a source close to the family said today.

"They almost certainly know by now the results," the source told ABC News.

"There are mixed signals," the source said. "If it wasn't her I'd think they'd come out and say it wasn't her with all the fanfare."

Aruban prosecutor Peter Blanken made headlines Thursday by telling CNN that the jaw bone was that of a young woman. Yet, after flying to the Netherlands for the testing, Blanken is headed home to Aruba, the source said, based on information out of Aruba. The Forensic Institute said earlier this week that the announcement of the findings would be left to Aruban authorities.

The bone, which the Dutch-language paper de Telegraaf reported was the lower half of the jaw with one molar still intact, was found by tourists last week on a beach in Aruba. Holloway, an 18-year-old high school senior from Alabama, vanished in the island country in May 2005 while on a school trip. If the bone is confirmed to be Holloway's it would be the first piece of physical evidence that the teenager was dead. The suspect in her disappearance has long been Dutch playboy Joran van der Sloot, who has never been formally charged.

Van der Sloot, who was 17 years old at the time of Holloway's disappearance, is now being held in a Peruvian prison after confessing to the murder of Stephany Flores, 21, earlier this year.

Both of Holloway's parents, who are divorced, are said to be waiting for word from Aruba. "It's very hard for me to talk to you. It's really not easy," he says in the video, released as part of a Dutch documentary. "I've made so many bad decisions for all the wrong reasons. ... I'm really very addicted to perks, especially gambling. That's why I've told so many lies." Twitty was left in tears at the end of the meeting with no sign that she had come any closer to finding her daughter. There have been many false hopes regarding Natalee's disappearance in the five years since she went missing. (Various media)

St. Maarten – CG Belon Visits PM Wescot-Williams

U.S. Consul General Valerie Belon paid a courtesy visit to St. Maarten PM Sarah Wescot-Williams, last week. (SXM Island Time)

St. Maarten – CG Belon Gives Presentation For Rotary Members

CG Valerie Belon met with the St. Maarten Rotary Club and gave a presentation concerning the U.S. Consulate top priorities during their weekly meeting. Belon noted that she continues to represent all the six Dutch Caribbean islands after the Netherlands Antilles dissolution.

The Consulate's two top priorities are counter narcotics and safety and security of American citizens. There are U.S. Forward Operating Locations (USFOLs) on Aruba and Curaçao. The USFOLs are multi-national counter narcotics operations, supported by U.S., Dutch and French military. They perform aerial surveillance and monitor drug shipments. The very successful USFOLs intercepted over US \$3 billion worth of illegal drugs last year. "This region is caught between the largest drug producing and consuming area of the world, so transshipment and all the related affects, such as drug abuse problems and money laundering are inevitable," Belon said.

Also, Belon discussed the consulate's second top priority which is safety and security of American citizens. Approximately two million Americans reside, visit, or transit on the six Dutch Caribbean islands every year. There is a small percentage of Americans who run into trouble. The consulate does not legally represent or defend individuals who are arrested, but pays quarterly visits to ensure they are being treated lawfully in the local justice system. A few Americans are currently imprisoned on St. Maarten. (Daily Herald)

St. Maarten – Courtesy Meeting CG Belon and SHTA Board

CG Valerie Belon met with St. Maarten Hospitality and Trade Association (SHTA) President Emil Lee and SHTA Executive Director Robert Dubourcq. Consular Warden Jack Stevens accompanied CG Belon. Topics of discussion included safety and security for the approximately two million Americans visiting the Dutch Caribbean islands annually. Current issues concerning the Dutch-American Friendship Treaty were raised. Also, American Citizens Services support was discussed. "CG Belon showed interest in the economic indicators, and received statistical data regarding the economic status," an SHTA release stated. (Daily Herald)

Curacao – The Safe Concordia Stay Extended by Two-Months

The planned six-month overlay stay of the Safe Concordia - in Curacao since June 10 - is extended by two-months. The semi-submersible vessel is built as an oil rig and then changed into a "floatel". The platform is a floating hotel for people working out at sea on oil and gas fields; it can accommodate 390 people, has large deck areas, workshops, cranes, offices, information technology facilities and recreational and entertainment areas, but only has a crew of 35 aboard during its period in Curacao. The Safe Concordia is moored at the deep-water harbor of Caracas Bay. The Cypress- based Company Rigzone decided to move the vessel to Curacao from the U.S., because of the start of the hurricane season and stringent U.S. immigration rules and procedures. (Various media)

St. Maarten – Alleged TIP Victims Scheduled to Return to Cuba

Nine alleged Cuban trafficking in persons victims, who were arrested last week, will be repatriated, prosecutors said Monday. Five persons, including a local taxi driver, were arrested nine days ago after law enforcement officials intercepted the illegal Cubans in a bus. The prosecutor could not confirm whether St. Maarten was their final destination. (Daily Herald)

Aruba – Holloway Case: Jawbone Test Results Due Today

Aruban prosecutors plan to release Tuesday the results of tests conducted on a jawbone found on an island beach and disclose whether it belongs to missing U.S. teenager Natalee Holloway, officials said. Prosecutors were expected to release the information Tuesday afternoon but it was unclear if authorities would just release a written statement or have a news conference.

The tests, conducted at the Netherlands Forensic Institute in The Hague, Netherlands, were to first determine whether the bone is human or animal. If the bone is human, authorities said, they would attempt to determine through DNA testing if it belonged to Holloway. The Alabama 18-year-old was last seen on the island in 2005.

Holloway's dental records were sent to the forensic institute last week, according to the FBI.

Tim Miller, director of Texas EquuSearch -- a search-and-rescue organization that has looked for Natalee Holloway -- said the girl's father believes it is his daughter's bone.

"Dave has been in contact with Aruban authorities and spoke with FBI this morning, the agent working the case. Dave believes it is Natalee," Miller said about Holloway's father, Dave Holloway. A call to the father was not immediately returned Monday.

Part of a jawbone with a tooth was found earlier this month by an American tourist near the Phoenix Hotel, a large resort on the western side of the island, Aruban prosecutor Peter Blanken said. The prosecutor said the bone was initially examined by a forensic expert in Aruba, who determined it was from a young woman. But Blanken cautioned the final determination would be made by the forensic institute.

Also on Monday, police collected a second bone that was found earlier this month on the beach by a New Jersey family, said Ana Angela, spokeswoman for Aruban prosecutors. However, "it does not appear to be human," said Richard Roy, general manager of the Westin Hotel.

The bone was found in the same general area as the first. The family, who was staying at the Westin, put it on their hotel balcony. They said that once they returned home and heard media reports on the jawbone, they called the FBI and then contacted the Westin. Staffers at the hotel found the bone on the balcony and notified police.

Holloway was last seen in the early hours of May 30, 2005, leaving an Oranjestad nightclub with Joran van der Sloot and two other men. She was visiting the island with about 100 classmates to celebrate their graduation from Mountain Brook High School in suburban Birmingham, Alabama.

Van der Sloot was detained twice in connection with Holloway's disappearance but never charged. He is now awaiting trial in Lima, Peru, on a murder charge in the death of Peruvian student Stephany Flores. Her body was found in May in a hotel room registered to van der Sloot. A surveillance camera captured images of the two entering the room. Van der Sloot, 23, is also charged with wire fraud and extortion in Alabama for allegedly attempting to extort more than \$250,000 from Holloway's family in return for disclosing the location of her body. (Various media)

Aruba - Jawbone not from Natalee Holloway

The piece of jawbone which was found in Aruba earlier this month turned out not to be from missing U.S. teenager Natalee Holloway, local authorities said yesterday. Research by the Netherlands Forensic Institute (NFI) has ruled out a connection with the young girl who disappeared without trace while on holiday on the island in May 2005. The bone was found on a beach near the Divi Phoenix Hotel. Joran van der Sloot remains the

main suspect in the Holloway case and was one of the last persons seen with her. He is at present being held by the authorities in Peru on suspicion of murdering 21-year old student Stephany Flores in Lima in May, exactly five years after Natalee vanished. The file of other missing persons on the island will now be checked to see if there is a possible link to the jawbone (Various newspapers).

St. Maarten - Justice Minister considering asylum for smuggled Cubans

St. Maarten's Justice Minister Roland Duncan will consider political asylum for the nine Cubans who were smuggled here ten days ago. Duncan said sending these men and women back to Cuba would be possible only after a thorough review of the case. He called statements by the Public Prosecutor's Office on Monday about the Cubans being sent home "premature." St. Maarten is bound to many international human rights treaties of which the Kingdom is a signatory. Conditions for political asylum include legitimate fear by the petitioners of harm, repression or other force against them in their homeland. Duncan said the Cubans had not petitioned for asylum up to Tuesday. Five persons, including a local taxi driver, were held last week for alleged involvement in the human smuggling ring (Daily Herald, Amigoe).

Curacao - Intelligence head reinstated

Edsel Gumbs, head of Curaçao's Intelligence Service must be given access to his office again. The three-month appointment of former Island Governor Lisa Dindial was declared invalid, a judge ruled in a civil servant case of Gumbs against the government, which had barred him from the premises and informed him that he would be dismissed and replaced. The judge felt there were no specific indications that Gumbs had been guilty of actions that constitute a dereliction of duty. The current MFK/PS/MAN coalition under the leadership of PM Schotte no longer has confidence in Gumbs, because he allegedly leaked sensitive information related to the screening of candidate ministers. Screening guidelines had been established by the former Antillean Government on February 10 of this year. The intelligence service is charged with this investigation, which because of time constraints had not been completed when the Schotte Cabinet took office on October 10. In consultation with and at the express request of Curaçao Governor General Frits Goedgedrag it continued afterward (Various newspapers).

Aruba - Stanford duped Aruba for \$35 million dollars

The class action suit brought by Institute Stanford Aruba, which represents victims of Stanford Group Aruba (SGA), against the Central Bank of Aruba (CBA) went to trial yesterday, November 25. The case was filed in court September of 2009. Institute attorney Gabri de Hoogd said that in Aruba alone, the American company Stanford Group Aruba caused losses amounting to \$35 million. Allen Stanford was convicted of fraud last year by U.S. authorities. Stanford Group Aruba was not registered as a bank and was therefore not under the supervision of CBA. The victims nevertheless believe that CBA should have supervised SGA and are holding CBA responsible. Attorney de Hoogd told the court that last year, CBA had publicly indicated that it was concerned about the practices of Stanford from the moment the company had established itself in Aruba. Even though SGA registered as a consultancy firm, the company operated as a bank. CBA must have been aware of this and should have taken action. CBA attorney

Carlo disputed that CBA had failed in its supervisory duties and stated that in another case the court had concluded that a supervisory bank (such as the then-Central Bank of the Netherlands Antilles) could only take limited action against credit institutions. The verdict is scheduled for January 26, 2011 (Amigoe).

St. Maarten - Parliament approved St. Maarten membership of Parlatino

Parliament unanimously approved St. Maarten's membership in the Latin American Parliament Parlatino on Wednesday as well as participation in eight commissions on topics of interest to St. Maarten. Membership may help the island tap more into trade and agriculture, moving it away from the one-pillar tourism economy. St. Maarten will participate in the commission for Economic Affairs, Social Welfare and Regional Development; Public Safety, Combat and Prevention of Narcotic Trafficking, Terrorism and Organized Crime; Education, Culture, Science and Technology and Communication; Health; Human Rights, Justice and Prison Policies; Gender Equity, Childhood and Youth; Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, and Environment and Tourism (Amigoe, Daily Herald).

CURAÇAO

Crime November 19 – 25

On November 21, a grocery store in Santa Maria was robbed by two men. The suspects were later arrested by police. The following evening, a pedestrian in Piscadera was beaten and robbed. In the morning of November 25, two men robbed a money courier in De Savaan. In the afternoon, a jewelry store in Santa Maria was robbed by three men (Extra, Amigoe, Antilliaans Dagblad).

ARUBA

Crime November 19 – 25

On November 20, a man at a busstop in Dakota was robbed (Diario Aruba, Amigoe).

ST. MAARTEN

Crime November 19 – 25

On November 22, a couple was robbed in their home in Sucker Garden by three men. The suspects had knocked on the victims' door. When they opened the door, the suspects forced their way in (Daily Herald).

Police step up controls

With the end-of-year holidays fast approaching, police plan to step up controls on everything from loitering to traffic violations, to lessen Christmas season crimes.

Officers will be present in various districts in the coming weeks as a crime deterrent (Daily Herald).

"The Weekly Press Summary is a compilation of stories running in the Dutch Caribbean press that is intended to alert readers about items of interest to them. There is no interpretation or verification of the facts contained therein."